

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3464

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7152

CALCUTTA 1162 FOLLOWS. SENT TO NEW DELHI FOR ACTION ON 16 MAY 77.
BEING RPT FOR YOUR ACTION/INFO.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 1162

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJ: DEFECTIONS TO JANATA IN THE NORTHEAST

1. A JANATA WAVE OF A DIFFERENT SORT SEEMS TO BE SWEEPING
THE NORTHEAST. JANATA MADE ONLY SLIGHT INROADS IN THIS
REGION IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS AND STATE ELECTIONS ARE
NOT SCHEDULED THERE, BUT CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS IN MANY OF THE
STATES HAVZ FALLEN OR ARE THREATENED AS A RESULT OF DEFEC-
TIONS. FOLLOWING IS A RUNDOWN OF SITUATION IN STATES
AFFECTED.

2. ASSAM: CONGRESS RETAINS MAJORITY IN ASSAM LEGISLATURE,
BUT DEFECTIONS HAVE BROUGHT DOWN ITS TOTAL FROM 95 MLAS
AFTER 1972 ELECTION TO 77 NOW (OUT OF TOTAL OF 114 IN LEG-
ISLATURE). CONGRESSMEN FEAR THAT FURTHER DEFECTIONS WILL
CAUSE PARTY TO LOSE MAJORITY. AT THE SAME TIME CONGRESS IS
FACED WITH INTERNAL TURMOIL, AS 35 CONGRESS MLAS ARE CALL-
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ING FOR RESTRUCTURING OF STATE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING RE-
PLACEMENT OF CHIEF MINISTER SARAT SINHA AND HOME MINISTER
HITESWAR SAIKIA. SINHA'S OPPONENTS HAVE APPARENTLY TAKEN
OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED BY END OF EMERGENCY AND POLITICAL
TURMOIL TO ATTACK SINHA, WHOM THEY HAVE LONG DISLIKED BE-
CAUZI OF HIS TRIBAL BACKGROUND. CONGRESS DISSIDENTS HAVE
ALSO CRITICIZED BOTH MEN FOR ACTIVITIES DURING EMERGENCY.

IN PARTIAL RESPONSE TO THE DISSIDENTS THE CHIEF MINISTER RESHUFFLED HIS CABINET ON MAY 13 TAKING OVER THE HOME MINISTRY FROM SAIKIA AND GIVING THE LATTER RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATION, PLANNING AND INFORMATION. OTHER CHANGES WERE ALSO MADE.

3. TRIPURA: AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (CALCUTTA 0781) CONGRESS GOVERNMENT IN TRIPURA WAS REPLACED BY CFD-CPM GOVERNMENT ON APRIL 1. NEWLY-FORMED JANAA, WHOSE LEADERSHIP IS COMPOSED OF EVEN MORE RECENT DEFECTORS FROM CONGRESS, HAS BEEN PUSHING FOR FRESH ELECTION. JANATA LEADERS ARE SAID TO OPPOSE CPM PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT AND TO FEAR THAT WITHOUT ELECTION THERE WILL BE NO PLACE FOR THEM. RECENT REPORT IN CALCUTTA PRESS SAYS THERE IS NOW POSSIBILITY OF JANATA JOINING CURRENT COALITION GOVERNMENT.

4. MANIPUR: ON MAY 13 CONGRESS GOVERNMENT IN MANIPUR RESIGNED AFTER DEFECTIONS TO JANATA HAD GIVEN LATTER A MAJORITY IN STATE LEGISLATURE. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORT STRENGTH OF CONGRESS IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY HAS FALLEN FROM 51 TO 21 SEATS WHILE JANATA NOW HAS TOTAL OF 35 SEATS IN 60 MEMBER HOUSE. LEADER OF DEFECTORS, YANGMASHO SHAIZA, WHO LEFT CONGRESS ONLY AFTER WINNING LOK SABHA SEAT ON CONGRESS TICKET, IS SAID TO BE SLATED TO BECOME NEW CHIEF MINISTER. FOR THE MOMENT, GOVERNOR HAS ASKED FORMER CABINET TO REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL NEW ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE.

5. SIKKIM: THE SIKKIM CONGRESS APPEARS TO HAVE GONE OVER TO JANATA EN MASSE. ON MAY 8 CONGRESS CHIEF MINISTER KAZI
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LHENDUP DORJI ANNOUNCED THAT HE AND SIKKIM CONGRESS WOULD MERGE WITH JANATA IN STATE. APPROVAL OF MOVE IS REPORTEDLY BEING BLOCKED BY GROUP WHICH HAD EARLIER FORMED A CFD IN STATE AND WHICH IS CLAIMING THAT DORJI WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR EXCESSES COMMITTED DURING EMERGENCY. THIS GROUP HAS CALLED FOR DISSOLUTION OF ASSEMBLY AND HOLDING OF FRESH ELECTIONS.

6. MIZORAM: ON MAY 9 CONGRESS GOVERNMENT HEADED BY CH. CHUNGA RESIGNED AND PRESIDENT'S RULE WAS IMPOSED IN MIZORAM. ACTION FOLLOWED DEFEAT OF CONGRESS CANDIDATE BY AN INDEPENDENT IN LOK SABHA ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGN BY MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY, THE PEOPLES CONFERENCE, FOR NEW STATE ELECTIONS. CHUNGA REPORTEDLY SAID HE HOPED HIS RESIGNATION WOULD HELP BRING MIZO UNDERGROUND AND JANATA GOVERNMENT CLOSER TOGETHER AND "FACILITATE THE TASK OF FINDING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT" OF THE MIZORAM INSURGENCY.

7. NAGALAND: WHILE PRESIDENT'S RULE REMAINS IN FORCE IN NAGALAND, JANATA VICTORY HAS RAISED HOPES FOR SETTLEMENT

OF INSURGENCY THERE. JAYAPRADASH NARAYAN IS VZRY HIGHLY THOUGHT OF AMONG THE NAGAS FOR HIS ROLE IN THE NAGALAND PEACE MISSION, WHICH HAS TRIED HARD TO WIN CONFIDENT OF UNDERGROUND IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT SETTLEMENT. TWO ASSOCIATES OF NAGA LEADER PHIZO MET WITH STATE GOVERNOR AND THEN TRAVELLED TO DELHI TO MEET WITH GOI OFFICIALS IN ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE MEETING BETWEEN PHIZO AND DESAI. GOI PRESUMABLY WILL MAKE NAGA ACCEPTANCE OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND SURRENDER OF ARMS PRECONDITION TO MEETING. IN INTERVIEW FROM LONDON REPORTED IN INDIAN EXPRESS PHIZO REFUSED TO ABANDON CLAIM FOR NAGA SOVEREIGNTY, BUT SAID NARAYAN AND DESAI WERE MEN OF PEACE AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SOMETHING POSITIVE WOULD COME FROM A MEETING BETWEEN HIM AND PRIME MINISTER. HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE WRITTEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER REQUESTING A MEETING.

8. COMMENT: OBSERVERS CONSIDER RUSH BY NORTHEASTERN STATES
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TO JOIN JANATA BANDWAGON TYPICAL OF TENDENCY OF LEADERS IN THIS AREA TO GRAVITATE TOWARDS GROUP THAT HOLDS POWER IN INDIA, IN THE HOPE OF SECURING PATRONAGE FOR THEIR PEOPLE AND THEMSELVES.

KORN

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